

## College Bound Scholarship: Year Two

The College Bound Scholarship program, a Washington Opportunity Pathway, made significant progress last school year. College Bound scholarship applicants nearly doubled in 2007-2008, new partnerships were forged, data agreements were signed, processes were streamlined, and broad-based media efforts were conducted.

School districts also continued integrating the College Bound Scholarship program into their yearly activities. Widespread efforts by superintendents, principals, counselors, teachers, and professional organizations demonstrated the program's growing acceptance.

Passed by the 2007 Legislature, the College Bound Scholarship program aims to raise the college aspirations of low-income students. The program promises college tuition for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program. To receive the scholarship, students in their senior year must be accepted to college, file a FAFSA, and meet the income requirements.

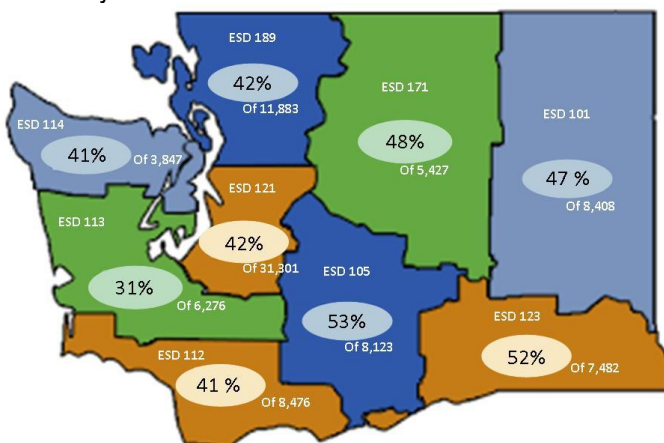
Washington currently ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> nationally in the percentage of low-income students participating in postsecondary education. In 10 years, these students will represent 33 percent of high school graduates.

The scholarship's goals are consistent with the state's *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*, which calls for increasing college affordability and accessibility in order to raise educational attainment and prepare more students for careers in the 21st Century.

## A look at the numbers

College Bound Scholarship applicants nearly doubled from 16,500 in 2007-08 to 32,000 in 2008-09. Last year only, 9<sup>th</sup> graders also were allowed to file applications. For these students and the 8<sup>th</sup> graders, filing a completed application by the June 30, 2009 deadline was critical.

Every effort was made to contact families to obtain missing applicant information. In some cases, families received as many as seven letters from the HECB. As a final step, schools were asked to forward letters to families. In the end, 86 percent of applications were completed. The percentage of eligible students who completed their applications is shown below by ESD.



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## A special report on the College Bound Scholarship Program



### Media and promotion

Throughout May and June, a radio and TV promotion featured Governor Gregoire urging students to sign up for the College Bound Scholarship. The promotion was part of a cooperative public relations strategy between the HECB Communications Division and the College Success Foundation. The effort also included a College Bound video on Washington State's website, PSAs in Spanish and English, a TV interview with HECB chair Jesus Hernandez, and a TV spot featuring Seattle television newscaster Joyce Taylor.

### Collaboration is key

The College Bound Scholarship program has provided new opportunities for collaboration between the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the K-12 system, community partners, and other government agencies to encourage students to prepare for postsecondary education. Thanks to a new federal College Access Challenge Grant, the HECB formalized partnerships with four non-profit organizations to promote college access and help schools sign up College Bound Scholars.



- The College Success Foundation placed a counselor in each of nine ESDs to work with schools on such efforts as organizing College Bound Scholarship sign-up events (including eight district-wide events). Incorporating elements of their other college access programs, CSF played an important role in helping boost the number of students and parents at sign-up events and follow-up efforts.
- The Metropolitan Development Council (MDC) in Tacoma played a key role in the second annual *Sign-Up Tacoma* event at TCC. The MDC also placed staff in Tacoma schools to work with students and teachers, and to coordinate sign-up efforts.
- In Wenatchee, the Community Foundation of North Central Washington partners with the district's GEAR UP program to sign up eligible students and provide support services.
- At the state level, the Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA) incorporates the national KnowHow2Go campaign with College Bound Scholarship sign-up events to inform students how to prepare for college. It also tripled the number of students who participated in the "I'm Going to College" program. These 3,000 6<sup>th</sup> graders got College Bound Scholarship information as part of the program.

The HECB also enjoyed a productive partnership with the Governor's College Bound Liaisons, Laurie and Art Dolan. Prior to her retirement in late 2008, Laurie Dolan was Governor Gregoire's Policy Director, and her husband, Art, is a retired middle school teacher. Enthusiastic supporters of College Bound, they used their statewide contacts and influence to spread the word among superintendents, professional organizations, and school principals.

### A commitment to the future

The 2007 Legislature pre-invested \$7.4 million, which the HECB placed into the GET program. The allocation was intended to cover the first two years of payments for the first cohort enrolling in 2012, and the first year of the second cohort enrolling in 2013.

Although the 2009 Legislature was not able to continue to pre-invest funds for the scholarship, the budget language noted, "...the state's College Bound Scholarship commitment will be fulfilled, and is not dependent upon nor diminished by this action." In addition, the program allows direct payments from the fiscal year in which the student enrolls similar to other state financial aid programs.

### Sustainable promotion efforts

The contracts with promotional partners through the federal College Access Challenge Grant will continue this year. The partners are focusing on building sustainable strategies in schools and districts.

For example, the College Success

Foundation is encouraging schools to incorporate the College Bound application into student/parent conferences and created a "check list" to help schools implement this strategy – go to: [www.hecb.wa.gov/collegebound](http://www.hecb.wa.gov/collegebound) and click on **School Personnel**.

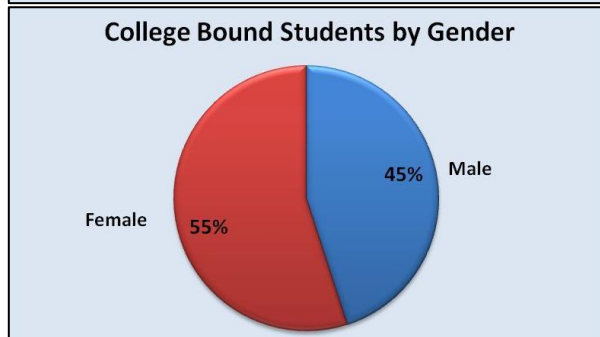
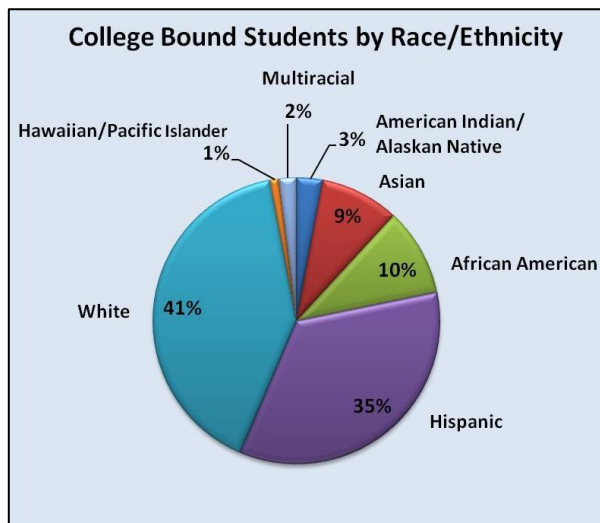
Other proven strategies include targeted letters and phone calls to eligible students, coordinated sign-up events, and attaching the materials to free and reduced price lunch applications.



## Agreement will better identify College Bound students and focus use of resources

A major accomplishment last year was finalizing the Data-Sharing Agreement between the HECB and OSPI.

Besides making it possible to track student progress through middle and high school, the agreement enhances the ability to analyze demographic characteristics as illustrated below for the over 20,000 records that were matched.



**GPA levels**  
(based on 8,000 records for which information was available)

$\geq 2.0$	75%
$\geq 3.0$	43%
$\geq 3.5$	23%

## Supporting College Bound students

Several issues of a College Bound newsletter, *Just Imagine!* have gone out to students and families. Designed to be “newsy,” readable and informative, it offers student-focused stories, college and career preparation tips, and strategies for success. To view the newsletter online go to: [www.hecb.wa.gov/Paying/waaidprgm/CBS-Students.asp](http://www.hecb.wa.gov/Paying/waaidprgm/CBS-Students.asp).

The HECB is collaborating with institution and sector liaisons to ensure scholars get connected with campuses early. In addition, existing college access programs are able to serve students as they progress through high school.

Middle and high school personnel have been encouraged to contact the HECB to receive the list of scholars attending their school to begin providing them with proper advising and support.

## Lights. Camera. College.



The HECB is offering a Student Film contest for students in grades 7-12. Videos may promote student financial aid

programs or encourage more students to prepare for and enroll in postsecondary education.

Winning videos will receive small prizes, official recognition, and will be posted on Washington State's YouTube website. Screenings will be held at the Washington State School Directors' Association annual conference in November 2009. The deadline for submission is **October 19**.